



TAMPA BAY HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE
Post Office Box 2192, Tampa, FL 33601-2192

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February 19, 2004

Office of the Secretary,
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W., TW325,
Washington, D.C. 20554
Room 201, The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Secretary:

The following comments are provided on behalf of the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety Committee in response to Public Notice DA 04-378 and petition RM-10321.

The Tampa Bay Harbor Safety Committee (TBHSC) is an organization established in 1997 consisting of port industrial, regulatory and environmental agencies working in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard and the State of Florida to improve the navigational safety and security in Tampa Bay. The TBHSC, with the assistance of the State of Florida, created a vessel traffic information system (VTIS) utilizing Differential Global Positioning System/ Automated Identification System (DGPS/AIS) technology. This technology greatly improved both the navigational safety and the vessel traffic management for Tampa Bay.

New International Maritime Organization technology standards for the implementation of AIS have been established that require critical upgrades to our existing VTIS system. We are now actively working with the Florida State legislature and the Tampa Port Authority to secure \$750,000.00 necessary to rebuild our system to ensure we continue to enjoy the continued protection that VTIS brings to the Tampa Bay region.

Maritel's proposal to limit the use of certain AIS channels to the Coast Guard and ship stations licensees, effectively prevents publicly funded VTIS initiatives like ours from operating without incurring untold fees. Maritel's proposal to charge fees to support non-Coast Guard AIS applications stifles local and regional VTIS initiatives that would otherwise address waterways safety and security risks only addressed by the Federal government in its designated Port and Waterways Safety System (PAWSS) ports. This runs counter to the public's best interest and the Coast Guard's Port and Waterway Safety Assessment (PAWSA) initiative conducted in Tampa that encouraged local initiatives and partnerships to establish effective, non-regulatory waterway management systems like VTIS. Leaving non-Coast Guard AIS users to bear the burden of the untold recurring costs Maritel may charge for AIS channel usage, is just bad public policy, and runs counter to our efforts to promote public safety and homeland security while protecting Tampa Bay's sensitive marine environment.

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The Tampa Bay Harbor Safety Committee is committed to its stewardship of Tampa Bay. We respectfully requests that Maritel's Sharing Proposal be rejected in favor of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) proposal to allocate Channels 87B and 88B exclusively for AIS use. We strongly believe the NTIA proposal is in the public's best interest and is consistent with our goal of rebuilding our Tampa Bay VTIS to better manage our waterway safety and security risks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sal Litrico', written over a horizontal line.

Sal Litrico
Chairman

cc. Captain Mike Farley, USCG MSO Tampa
Qualex International, Inc
Maria Ringold, Federal Communications Commission
Tim Maguire, Federal Communications Commission
Jeff Tobias, Federal Communications Commission